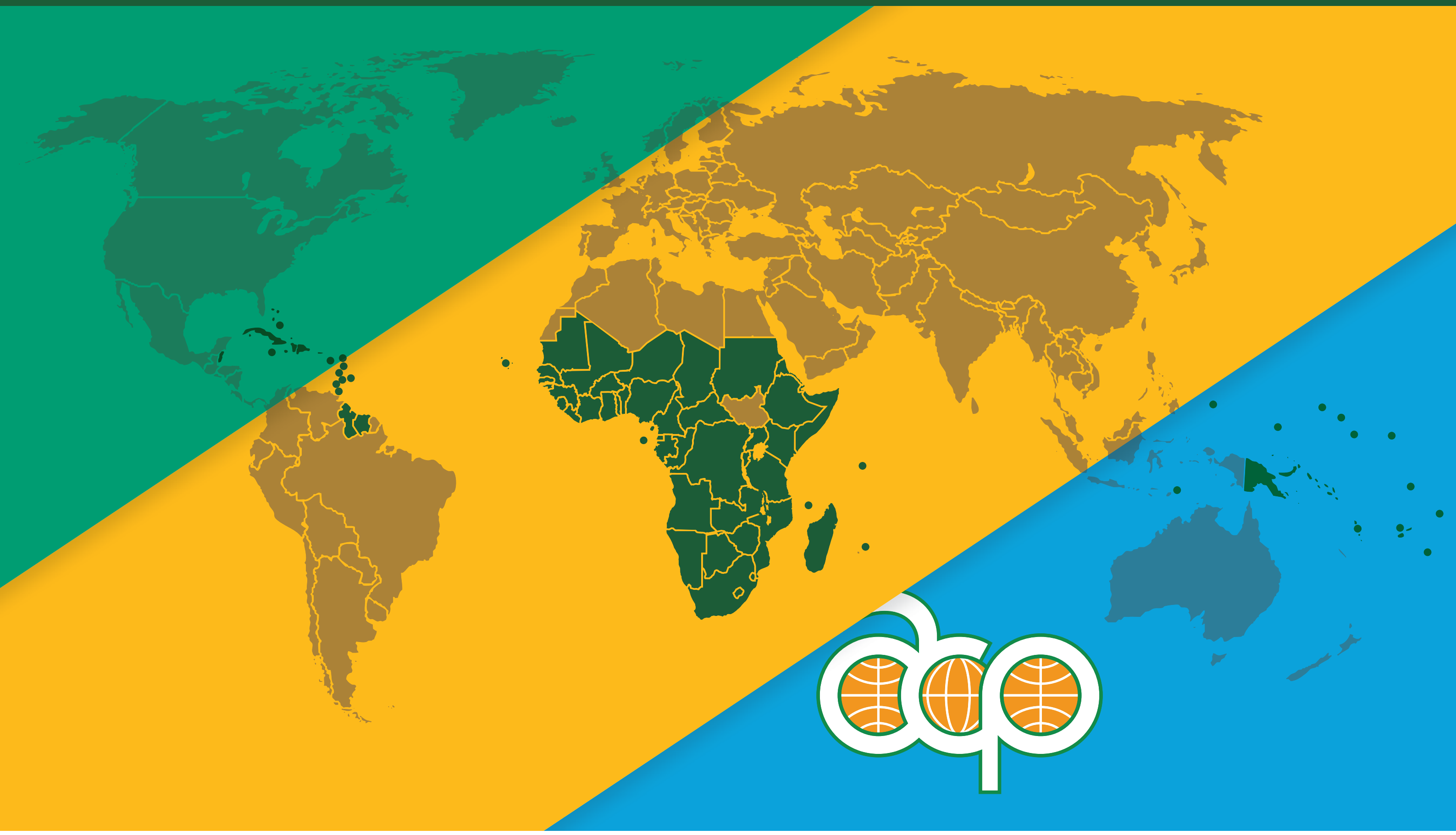
POLICY BRIEF 04



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Revisiting the Georgetown Agreement: Comparative Region-building in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific

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1. Introduction

The 1975 Georgetown Agreement established the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) Group of States. The Group comprises Cuba and the 78 African (48), Caribbean (15), and Pacific (15) countries which are signatories to the Cotonou Agreement, an accord between the ACP and the European Union (EU) signed in 2000.

The Group's four key objectives are: to promote and strengthen unity and solidarity among its members; to coordinate the activities of the Group in the implementation of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement; to consolidate, strengthen, and maintain peace and stability in order to improve the welfare of the Group's one billion people; and to promote trade, development cooperation, and regional integration within and between the ACP. The Cotonou accord which provides the overarching framework for the EU's relations with the ACP, ends in February 2020. This has led to multiple rounds of negotiations in Brussels to agree a new framework.

Region-building and regional integration have the potential to enhance inclusive sustainable economic growth, as well as development, security, and democratic governance across the ACP. In a quest to build institutional frameworks to promote Pan-Africanism, African leaders established the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, the East African Community (EAC) in 1967, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in 1992, and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) in 1994. Similarly, Caribbean and Pacific governments have embraced the concept of regionalism to combat their socio-economic challenges, resulting in the creation of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) in 1971, and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in 1973.

In a bid to contribute to region-building efforts in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific; to revisit the Georgetown Agreement; and to examine the post-Cotonou negotiations, the ACP secretariat in Brussels, Belgium; CARICOM in Georgetown, Guyana; and the Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversation (IPATC) at the University of Johannesburg in South Africa, in collaboration with the Shridath Ramphal Centre at the University of the West Indies (UWI), held a two-day High-Level Consultation in Barbados on 26 and 27 March 2019, titled "Revisiting the Georgetown Agreement: Comparative Region-Building in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific". About 35 diplomats, scholars, and civil society actors across the three regions discussed carefully selected topics over the two days around five broad themes: Region-Building in the Caribbean; Continental Regionalism: The African Union (AU); Regionalism in West, East, and Southern Africa; Regionalism in the Pacific; and Regionalism and the Future of ACP-EU Relations. This report is based on discussions at the meeting, as well as the conference concept paper.

> "Region-building and regional integration have the potential to enhance inclusive sustainable economic growth, as well as development, security, and democratic governance across the ACP."

OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 8TH SUMMIT OF ACP HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT IN PORT MORESBY, PAPUA NEW GUINEA IN MAY 2016.

IMAGE SOURCE - Flickr
LINK - https://www.flickr.com/photos/104872534@N04/27462325761/in/album-72157669003724652

2. ACP: Post-Cotonou and Beyond

The current negotiations towards a post-Cotonou Partnership Agreement present the 79-member ACP Group with an opportunity to evaluate intra-ACP ties, as well as its relationship with the EU. Four critical questions addressed by the Barbados consultation were:

1. In view of the European Union's current policy of working with separate regions, how can the ACP ensure that continued solidarity and cohesion are maintained?
2. Given the potential benefits of alternative partnerships, how can the ACP engage with the Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) grouping, and other regional blocs such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), to promote their mutual interests?
3. In what areas should the ACP collaborate with the EU in promoting mutual cooperation in the post-2020 period?
4. What measures has the ACP implemented to strengthen its relationship with civil society actors within its three regions and beyond?

In the negotiations leading to the 1975 Lomé Convention between the ACP and the then European Economic Community (EEC), the former spoke with one voice throughout the negotiations. The "spirit of Lomé" was exemplified by the unity of interests of ACP states. Africa and the Pacific, for example, demonstrated their solidarity in supporting the Caribbean group's demands on rum in their negotiations with the EEC. Such solidarity and the technical skills and confidence of ACP negotiators, however, seem to have declined since Georgetown.

The ACP is increasingly conscious of the need to be less dependent on the EU (which still provides about half of its annual budget), and to become a more significant player in the global arena.

3. Regionalism in the Caribbean

The Caribbean Community is a regional organisation consisting of 15 member states and five associate members, headquartered in Georgetown, Guyana. Regional integration in CARICOM is centred around four key pillars: economic integration; human and social development; foreign policy coordination; and societal cooperation. There has been some success in foreign policy coordination, evident in the Community's role in global negotiations such as the 2014 United Nations (UN) Arms Trade Treaty, and the 2016 Paris Agreement on Climate Change. CARICOM's activities are led by specialised institutions that perform specific tasks in areas such as education, health, agriculture, disaster management, climate change, and crime and security. For example, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) has been active in combating climate change, while the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) led the fight against *chikungunya* (a mosquito-borne viral disease).

The CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) is an enlarged market that seeks to achieve free trade in goods and services, as well as free movement of capital and skilled Community citizens. CARICOM's market is set to grow from six million to 16 million when Haiti meets the requirements to participate in the CSME, which is currently constrained by a lack of coordinated decision-making.

The Caribbean consists of diverse regional groupings that reflect key issues such as different colonial legacies; regional geo-politics; and the quest by Caribbean countries to establish links with Latin America and North America.

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THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE SECRETARIAT OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY IN GEORGETOWN, GUYANA.

IMAGE SOURCE - CARICOM Today
LINK - https://today.caricom.org/2018/05/15/media-advisory-46th-meeting-of-coted/

These groupings include the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM), and the Central American Integration System (SICA). While this has obvious advantages such as access to additional resources and increased regional and global visibility, challenges range from limited cooperation to limited resources for a large number of regional projects.

4. Comparative Regionalism: The African Union and the European Union

The African Union – successor to the Organisation of African Unity – is the premier African continental organisation. Comprising 55 members with more than one billion people, its headquarters are in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The AU has established several institutional and normative frameworks, particularly in the areas of conflict resolution and democracy-promotion. These include the 2002 African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), and the 2011 African Governance Architecture (AGA). The AU has conducted peacekeeping in Burundi, Darfur, and Somalia, while democracy-promotion found practical expression in the sanctions imposed on Togo (2005), Mali (2012), and Egypt (2013), following unconstitutional changes of government in these countries.

In comparison with the European Union which accounts for around 20 percent of the global economy and enjoys intra-regional trade of 60 percent, Africa accounts for three percent of the world's economy and intra-regional trade is about 14 percent. While the EU Commission has about 33,000 staff, the AU Commission has less than 1,000 personnel. Africa's integrationists, however, do not appear to have learned from past lessons of weak, poorly funded, moribund OAU institutions. European integration, in contrast, was pushed by the concrete interests of politicians, bureaucrats, big business, and farmers who derived material benefits from the integration process, as did their populations.

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The AU's 2015 *Agenda 2063's* lofty goals such as increasing intra-African trade from 12 percent in 2013 to 50 percent by 2045; silencing all the guns by 2020; and ending terrorism, gender-based violence, and drug and human trafficking, seem ambitious. While the 15-member AU Peace and Security Council has been active in peacemaking efforts across the continent, other institutions such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), and the Economic, Social, and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), remain fledging and donor-dependent. The 2019 African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) focuses on the facilitation of trade; infrastructure; establishing a common market for goods, services, and investment; and ensuring the free movement of persons. To implement the AfCFTA will, however, require political leadership on trade, mobility, and funding, as well as stronger African sub-regional bodies.

THE AU CONFERENCE CENTRE AND OFFICE COMPLEX (AUCC) IN ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA SERVES AS THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE AFRICAN UNION.

IMAGE SOURCE - CTGN Live
LINK - https://news.cgtn.com/news/346b6a4e30677a6333566d54/share_p.html

5. Regionalism in West, East, and Southern Africa

5.1 West Africa

The Economic Community of West African States has 15 members with a population of about 340 million. Its headquarters are in Abuja, Nigeria. The sub-regional body has engaged in democracy-promotion in Togo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, and Gambia. Its 2001 Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance provides a normative framework for these efforts, seeking to set standards for democracy across West Africa.

Key initiatives to establish a free trade area in the sub-region include the 1979 Protocol Relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Residence, and Establishment; and the 2008 Common External Tariff. The 1979 Protocol is regarded as one of the most successful in the world, with cross-border mobility rates of about 68 percent in West Africa. The ECOWAS external tariff became operational in 2015, and some member states have implemented its single Customs Declaration Form for customs administration. However, Nigeria's dominance (accounting for about 70 percent of West Africa's economy) is often criticised by its neighbours. Despite the country's large economy, levels of intra-regional trade remain low, accounting for 10.6 percent of total trade. A further obstacle to sub-regional integration is that France is perceived, in some quarters, as using the francophone West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) as a political tool to dilute the influence of the Nigerian-led ECOWAS.

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THE EXTERIOR OF THE ECOWAS SECRETARIAT BUILDING IN ABUJA, NIGERIA.

IMAGE SOURCE - The Guardian Nigeria
LINK - https://guardian.ng/news/ecowas-seeks-u-s-assistance-on-security-political-stability/

5.2 Tripartite Regionalism: COMESA, the EAC, and SADC

The Tripartite agreement now covers the 27 countries of COMESA, SADC, and the EAC. With a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of $1.3 trillion and a population of 791 million, the Tripartite area accounts for 60 percent of Africa's economy and population. The second summit of the Tripartite heads of state held in South Africa's industrial heartland of Johannesburg in 2011 started negotiations on the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA), and proposed the adoption of a developmental approach to regional integration based on three key pillars: industrial development; infrastructure development; and market integration. The third summit in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, in 2015, launched the TFTA.

The three pillars aim to create a large market that enhances investment and industrial development. The infrastructure pillar has led efforts to establish a joint master plan for transport and energy; the industrial development pillar has provided an Industrial Cooperation Framework; while the market integration pillar has established a Tripartite Non-Tariff Barriers online reporting, monitoring, and elimination mechanism in all states.

6. Regionalism in the Pacific

Pacific diplomacy played a significant role in the establishment of the 2015 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on the Ocean (SDG 14) and the 2016 Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The Pacific Islands Forum has 18 members with a population of 37 million. In 2017, its leaders endorsed the Blue Pacific identity as a collective action to achieve their socio-economic development goals. These are based on shared ocean identity, ocean geography, and ocean resources. In the post-Cotonou negotiations, some of the Pacific's negotiating priorities include: ocean governance; safeguarding the region's resources and security; achieving the SDGs; and strengthening capacities to address climate change and disaster resilience.

The geo-strategic competition and cooperation that play out in the Indo-Pacific have, however, weakened the PIF. These revolve around a perceived lack of consultation on the part of the Quad countries – Australia, Japan, India, and the United States (US) – who are the driving forces behind the Indo-Pacific Strategy. These countries often do not consult small Pacific Island states. In addition, the PIF's fight against climate change is sometimes undermined by the policies of Washington, Canberra, and Tokyo which are often targeted against China. However, nine PIF members have joined Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative. Furthermore, PIF leaders have adopted the 2018 Boe Declaration to manage their security challenges, including climate change.

7. Regionalism and the Future of ACP-EU Relations

The ACP's summits in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, in 2012, and Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, in 2016, both laid the groundwork for the post-Cotonou negotiations. At the 2016 summit, the Group underlined its determination to renew the ACP-EU post-2020 partnership. In this regard, three priorities were identified: strengthening intra-ACP cooperation; establishing multiple partnerships with a view to becoming an effective global player; and ensuring sustainable funding of the activities and operations of the Group.

The principal objective of a post-Cotonou agreement is to enhance sustainable development among ACP states in coordination with the provisions of *Agenda 2030* on the UN SDGs. Some of the specific objectives include: a commitment to democracy, peace, and security; the promotion of regional integration and respect for the principles of subsidiarity, complementarity, and proportionality in relation to regional and continental groupings; unequivocal support for multilateralism and a fair and equitable rules-based global order; the promotion of preferential trading arrangements; and increasing the role of the private sector and civil society in the socio-economic transformation of ACP member states. The current talks are being negotiated under a single undertaking with regional protocols. This provides for a partnership that seeks to address the specificities of each region.

While the ACP recognises the significance of the past partnership with the EU, the Group must ensure that any new agreement represents a shift from donor-recipient approaches to an accord that inculcates a spirit of equality and mutual respect. The European Development Fund (EDF) is likely to be scrapped. The ACP Group must, however, insist on the principle of co-management of, as well as long-term predictable, funding for future thematic and regional programmes.

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ACP-EU POST-COTONOU NEGOTIATIONS IN SESSION AT ACP HOUSE. ACP LIBRARY, 2019.

IMAGE SOURCE - **ACP**

8. Policy Recommendations

The following eight key policy recommendations emerged from the March 2019 High-Level Consultation in Barbados:

1. There is an urgent need to strengthen South-South cooperation in order to enhance intra-ACP trade and promote development among member states. Engagement with groups such as BRICS and ASEAN must thus be prioritised.

2. ACP states must become less reliant on resource-based exports, and instead explore high-tech sectors in order to guarantee sustainable growth and development across its three regions.

3. ACP agreements must be legally binding, and a single framework should be used to forestall the recurrence of regional organisations such as the AU taking contradictory positions to those of the ACP.

4. The ACP should share its knowledge of "best practices" of governance and development across its three regions.

5. There is an urgent need for continued mobility of ideas, people, goods, and services across Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific.

6. Coherent agendas and concrete plans further need to be crafted and driven by strong ACP regional leaders and states in order to negotiate more equitable trade deals with Brussels. Greater solidarity should also be fostered among ACP governments, and annual dues regularly paid to reduce the Group's financial dependence on the EU.

7. The ACP should raise its profile at the UN in New York and Geneva, and at key global conferences.

8. Finally, the ACP should do more to incorporate civil society into its activities. The Group can benefit from the use of think-tanks from its three regions to generate new knowledge and concrete policies.

"The ACP should share its knowledge of "best practices" of governance and development across its three regions."

MEMBERS OF THE 21ST MEETING OF THE PACIFIC FORUM ECONOMIC MINISTERS AT THE PALAU INTERNATIONAL CORAL REEF CENTRE IN APRIL 2018.

IMAGE SOURCE - Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
LINK - https://www.forumsec.org/2018-pacific-islands-forum-economic-ministers-meeting-action-plan/